

TDY to Incirlik a Rewarding Experience

by MSgt Darlene L. Jones ("Lucy")

Superintendent, 39th ONW Services (11 Sep – 28 Nov 99)

We rotate in and we rotate out. Some of us spend 60 days, some 90 days, the less fortunate, 120 days. But, hold on a minute, it depends on how you look at it. A 120-day TDY to Incirlik, Turkey, couldn't be all that bad. Sure, you're away from your loved ones and all, but there are some positive factors, or should I say "bene-factors," to consider --federal tax exclusion while TDY, family separation allowance, foreign duty pay, and a pretty good per diem rate. Now you think, "Hey, I can do this." That was my line of thinking when I knew I had to go, especially when my TDY was cut from 120 to 60 days; but, what a most rewarding and fun TDY deployment experience it proved to be.

There I was living in "Tent City," alias Hodja Village, serving as Superintendent of Services in support of Operation Northern Watch (ONW). Our combined everyday mission was to enforce the United Nations-mandated no-fly zone over northern Iraq. I like the way Col Terry New, 39th Operations Group Commander, put it; "No matter how insignificant you feel your job may be, your contribution is part of a total team effort that has a lot of moving parts..." Our "moving part" for the mission, as far as Services was concerned, was to promote esprit de corps of the troops through lodging, recreation, and fitness.

Capt Richard Danielson, Chief of Services, ONW, led our team of 13 Services personnel. His call sign was "BAMA" and he didn't let a day go by of his 120-day deployment at Incirlik without thinking of ways to make things better for the 1,200 deployed personnel at Tent City. He motivated all of us through a complete reskinning project of approximately 300 tents. He enthusiastically led numerous distinguished visitors through tours of Tent City, including The Honorable Whitten Peters, Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Jim Finch.

Our lodging operation, headed by TSgt Louis Comus ("Casper") and his staff, SSgt Dexter Laffin ("Cowboy"), SrA Tim Jones ("Mr. Olympia"), and SrA Robyn Matthews ("Creeper"), ensured all incoming personnel had a space to live while deployed, providing TVs, VCRs, refrigerators, microwaves, as well as clean linen to each tent. TSgt Comus' efforts didn't go unrecognized during his deployment. He was spotlighted as "ONW Warrior" in the "Tip of the Sword" newsletter publication.

TSgt Mark Webber ("Hawkeye") and TSgt (sel) Irene Ramey ("Bouji") ran the "happening spot" known as the Village Pub. This large clam shell tent was one of two NAF operations managed by Services. It was here that deployed personnel could enjoy pool, darts, table tennis, video arcade, a variety of music...oh, and beer! Weber and Ramey provided free pizza nights, tournaments and a variety of music every night of the week.

TSgts Judy Collier ("Hafadai") and Jeffrey Andrews ("Husker") operated our 'round the clock Morale Tent which was our other NAF operation, with the assistance of SrA

Octavia Johnson (“Shorty”), SrA Jefffrey Kaplan (“Tiger”), and SrA Michelle Cooper (“Yacker”). Deployed personnel could purchase ONW mementos, snacks, and beverages. They could take full advantage of six TV monitors and play Nintendo 64 or Sony Play Stations to their hearts’ content. There were eight booths to place your morale calls back to your loved ones and three AT&T phone card booths. At the counter, we offered free video rental with over 600 videos to choose from. Monies generated from our NAF operations were put right back into our events and programs. TSgt Andrews took complete charge of the Fitness Tent, rearranging equipment and setting up a state-of-the-art multi-station machine.

Co-located within the Morale Tent was Family Support. They had a great staff of people always ready to assist you with setting up with a Hotmail e-mail account and to answer any other questions you may have. The post office provided free pack and wrap to send home those Turkish treasures you just paid a bargain price for. The ITT offered tours to local tour spots, such as Capadoccia and Castle by the Sea.

Incirlik wasn’t such a terrible deployment after all. I could go on and on about the many accomplishments of our Services folks during their 60-, 90-, and 120-day deployment time frame at Incirlik and will continue to do through the palace tenures and on into Air Expeditionary Force (AEF). I’m proud of my Services folks and I’m proud to be part of the Services team.

Working with the Army, Navy, British and Turkish forces gave me a strong appreciation for other services. We pulled together as a team each putting forth our combined knowledge and support thorough organizations; Services, Supply, CE’s Prime Beef, PERSCO, Family Support, Chapel, Military Equal Opportunity, Transportation, Security Forces and Medical accomplishing the ONW mission.



TSgt Select Irene Ramey (left) and MSgt Darlene Jones of the 15th Services Squadron, Hickam AFB, brought a little bit of Hawaii to Operation Northern Watch at Incirlik, Turkey. Ramey flashes the popular Hawaiian “shaka” sign as they stand in the middle of Tent City.